

living which it is our privilege to attain.—
Christian Leader.

PRAY AND WORK

The great human duties are prayer and work—prayer for every needed blessing, and work to realize it; prayer as though God must do the whole, and work as though we must do it all ourselves. But who that waits to know the philosophy of answered prayer will ever pray? And who that waits to be sure that there shall be no mistake will ever work? We walk in a way that we know not. We labor for our Master, but never know beforehand what shall prosper, whether this or that. We lay wise plans, and they miscarry. We commit gross blunders, and they are overruled for good. We exult in some prosperity, and get leanness with it. We murmur at some adversity, and find it big with blessings. The lines of our life are all in God's hands. What shall befall us we can not know. What is expedient we can not tell. Only this we know, that God would shape us to our own best interest, and to our greatest usefulness.

The Real Touchstone

Francis de Sales.

The highest achievement of charity is to love our enemies; but to bear cheerfully with our neighbor's failings is scarcely an inferior grace. It is easy enough to love those who are agreeable and obliging—what fly is not attracted by sugar and honey? But to love one who is cross, perverse, tiresome, is as unpleasant a process as chewing pills. Nevertheless, this is the real touchstone of brotherly love. The best way of practicing it is to put ourselves in the place of him who tries us, and to see how we would wish him to treat us if we had his defects. We must put ourselves in the place of buyer when we sell, and seller when we buy, if we want to deal fairly.

On The Inside

While walking down the street one day, I passed a store where the proprietor was washing a large plate-glass show-window.

There was one soiled spot which defied efforts to remove it. After rubbing hard at it, using much soap and water, and failing to remove it, he found out the trouble. "It's on the inside," he called out to some one in the store.

Many are striving to cleanse the soul from its stains. They wash it with the tears of sorrow; they scrub it with the soap of good resolves; they rub it with the chamomile of morality! but still the consciousness of it is not removed. The trouble is, "It's on the inside."

If love is to be the king of your life and mine, if with us here, amid all the strife and rivalry that make up our "workaday world," the voice that bids us love is to be regnant over all other voices, somewhere or other there must be the spell that compels us to do so. An apostle has found the spell when he wrote, "The love of Christ constraineth me." *Bishop Potter.*

LESSON FOR JULY 3

BY THE EDITOR

The Kingdom Divided.—1 Kings 12: 16-25.

GOLDEN TEXT: A soft answer turneth away wrath; but grievous words stir up anger.—Prov. 15: 1.

LESSON THOUGHT: Following foolish advice leads to ruin.

Home Readings

Wise counsel rejected. 1 Kings 12: 1-11.
The Kingdom Divided. 1 Kings 12: 12-25.
Idolatry established. 1 Kings 12: 26-23.
The event foretold. 1 Kings 11: 28-40.
Despising counsel. Prov. 15: 1-14.
Refusing to hear. Zech. 7: 8-14.
Pride and destruction. Prov. 16: 16-23.

Introductory Notes

We now begin a course of study in the Old Testament Scriptures which is to continue six months. Just one year and a half ago we studied the closing days of King Solomon. A due portion of our time should be given to the study of these ancient scriptures. They have value beyond the mere historical facts which they record. They teach us important lessons, great religious truths, which if properly understood will give us a much clearer conception of the new kingdom which had its visible beginning when Jesus of Nazareth was born. We should enter upon these studies therefore with praying hearts, asking the guidance of the Holy Spirit, that we may be able to grasp the deeper, spiritual meaning of these events which were but preparatory to the fuller development of the glorious kingdom of God under the new dispensation, the fruits of which we now enjoy.

Meaning of the Text

Verse 16. Read the whole of this chapter. At a meeting of the people they appealed to the king that he would make their burden lighter and their yoke easier, which if he would do they would serve him. But instead of this he increased their burdens. Then they said, we have neither fairness nor kindness from David's house, what duty do we therefore owe to it? The king has no interest in us: why should we serve him? He gives no heed to our appeals, why should we continue slaves? Let us go to our homes and prepare to resist this despotism.

V. 17. There was more or less intermingling of the tribes, and the meaning is that the members of other tribes which had their homes in the city of Judah did not join the revolt but remained under Jeroboam.

V. 18. This was an attempt to stop the revolt, but the king was ignorant of the extent of the rebellion. He supposed Adoram, the chief tax collector, could pacify them, and by persuasion and threats bring them back again. In sending this man he made a grievous blunder, for he was the most hated man in all the kingdom, and the indignant people rose up and killed him.

Vs. 19, 20. Jeroboam had been banished to Egypt by Solomon, but Israel had sent for him, and when the people learned

that he had returned, they called him unto the congregation, the general assembly of the people, and publicly proclaimed him king over Israel. The dividing line between the two kingdoms was thro the southern part of Benjamin. The larger part of this tribe belonged to the northern kingdom, the rest was absorbed into the tribe of Judah. About two-thirds of the population and the same proportion of the area, belonged to the northern kingdom.

V. 21. This was Rehoboam's second attempt to subdue the rebellion, and this time by force of arms. He now found that it required all his military force to accomplish his purpose. The fact that he had an army of 180,000 trained soldiers, shows that his kingdom was well organized.

Vs. 22-24. On these verses we observe: (1) That beyond this we know nothing of this man Shemaiah. He was evidently a prophet of note or his words would not have been regarded as they were. (2) Benjamin is included with the house of Judah because a small part went with the king and was absorbed into Judah. (3) The king was forbidden by the prophets to take up arms against his brethren, and the reason assigned is that this thing is of the Lord, that is the division is of the Lord. How this disruption could be of the Lord is somewhat mysterious, but under the circumstances, with such leaders as they had, it was better that the kingdom was divided. A united kingdom would have been the *best* thing, but as it was the people were not worthy of God's best, so he gave them *second best*. Better separate than remain together without peace. So Paul and Barnabas. An internal war might have exposed the whole nation to the enemy and resulted in its destruction.

V. 25. He rebuilt the town of Sechem and made it his capital for the time being. He soon removed it to Tizrah, a few miles distant (1 Kings 14: 17; 15: 21, 33); this remained the capital until Ahab moved it to Samaria.

The Lesson Applied

1. *Asking advice.*—It is not always a good thing to seek advice from others. We are responsible for our own choices, and every one should be taught to think for himself that he may make his choice wisely. There are times however when we do well to turn to others for their counsel. In this Rehoboam did wisely. He was in a responsible position, and he needed the counsels of others to aid him in the administration of public affairs. Yet he showed himself very foolish. He went to the old men for advice, but he rejected their counsel because the young men advised him differently. As a rule old men can give good counsel. They have had experience, and they can be very helpful to those who have not advanced so far in years. Counsel is not always safe simply because it comes from old men, but the chances are that it is safer than that given by young giddy persons who have had no experience.